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Wesleyannes DO think . . .

And two aspiring young essayists make their appearance. Freshmen *Ann Strain* and *Marian Hine* present thoughts on two outstanding subjects of today, our relationship with England and the effect of a devastating war upon children. *Marian's Thoughts on Britain* and *Anne's Somebody's Children* are good reading for anybody's time and show distinct ability in the literary field. . .

* * *

Noel . . .

Mildred Collins is already well recognized as one of Wesleyan's finest scribes. She is at her best in *White Candles*, a lovely and inspiring Christmas pageant. . .

* * *

Twice talented . . .

Is *Miriam Chylinski*, and another new star is found. For she wields a clever pen in describing the jeopardy of Jr. and how *She Must Have Bribe the Gods*. It's all fine advice for the few (?) of you who might be stalking a man. . .

FOR YOUR

INFORMATION

Of love and war . . .

"*Go and Catch a Falling Star*", Chuck told her. And *Peggy Halliburton* has written a beautiful story of love and war. . .

Margy Ragan's Living Memorial shows the struggle of a girl against the grief of war and her victory over death. . .

Then there's the ever present contest between *That Blue Lady* vs. *This Blue Girl*, which, according to *Mary Smith*, has been settled in at least one instance. . .

And in the lighter vein is *Martha Rumble's* amusing account of a handsome hound, who joined the Wags, and the kitty cutie he left behind. . .

* * *

"The play's the thing" . . .

For all you Shakespeare students who will be, or have already been, struggling over a one-act play, *Alda Alexander's Ten Minutes from Zero* is a good example of what can be done in this line. It is the story of a khaki shirt "with two sharp folds in front and three across the back." . . .

* * *

The poet's corner . . .

Wesleyan poets represented in this issue are *Ann Strain*, *Tracy Horton*, *Effie Thornton*, *Margy Ragan* and *Mary Collins*, *Ann's* name happens to be the only new one in this capacity, and we now hope she will take her place as an old contributor. . .

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POEM

"Living," they said, "What is it after all?"
 And turning memories over in my mind,
 I found that some were written in italics.

That first day when you grinned at me,
 And sent the sun to smile upon my heart. . .

One night when work was done,
 And you and I sat side by side in Charlie's steak
 house.
 The workmen round us laughed among them-
 selves,
 And we sat silent, shoulders . . . elbows touch-
 ing,
 And we sat silent, stirring coffee thoughtfully,
 And we sat silent . . . living.

One night when wiser ones had gone to bed,
 We, talking, hit upon a subject we could feel,
 And we sat talking . . . fighting . . . then agree-
 ing,
 And we sat talking . . . living.

The days we worked and plugged along to-
 gether,
 Some others finished sooner, went away,
 But we sat working, digging, grasping ideas,
 And we sat working, learning fascination,
 And we sat working . . . living.

That hour that had to come, we knew,
 To separate our touching shoulders, elbows,
 To take away your grin that sunned my heart,
 To stop our talking, fighting, then agreeing.
 And we stood parting, silent, even smiling,
 And we stood parting . . . living.

—TRACY HORTON

WHITE CANDLES

Noel felt cold dampness strike her cheeks as she pushed through the last revolving doors and stood once more on the sidewalk outside the giant Mason Building. Less than five minutes before she had been on the twenty-fourth floor of the building hearing a voice say, "I'm sorry, but we cannot use *this* play either, Miss Lester."

"But this," she interrupted. "Surely *this* . . . It's different."

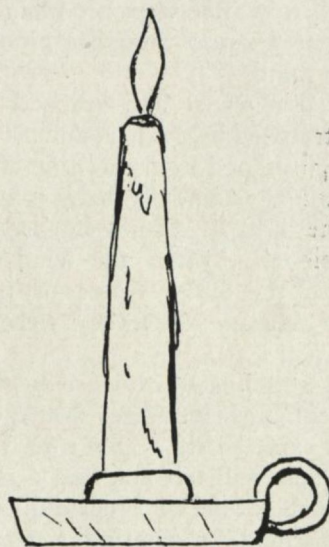
"I'm sorry," the man continued somewhat impatiently. "It is not what we need." Then, in a moment of pity as, hopeless and defeated, she turned to leave, he added, "If you really want to know, you are giving us nothing but cynical words. Your characters should have something to believe in. Don't you know you have to believe in something? If you don't, there's no happiness, no success . . . not even much life."

"There are time when one cannot believe," she answered simply.

Then she was opening the door; and in a moment of afterthought he called to her, "Oh, Miss Lester, I'm very busy. Please don't bother to bring any more of your plays unless you have the recommendation of a good critic."

Noel did not speak. . . She could not. . . Neither could she think nor hear nor see. She simply closed the door behind her, walked to the elevator, and went down, watching the numbers on the floors pass monotonously, coming at last to "1", multitudes of people, a haze of doors, and, finally, the realistic coldness of the outer air. She stood a moment just outside the door, feeling the wind against her face, accustoming her body to the cold, waiting for her eyes, and then her head, to clear once more. And all the while she clutched the manuscript—on it a single word—"Rejected."

Was it an hour or two or three or ten she walked? How could she know? For she had



ceased to think of time, and now realized only the calmness of the wind's cool fingers on her brow.

At last she noticed that the city had turned on its lights; and behind her—along the streets through which she had passed—the galaxy of neon began its frolicking play. She looked and remembered an ironical fact—this night of her defeat was Christmas Eve. She laughed a bit, a crazy little weary laugh, so near to crying that it would have been hard to draw a line and say, "This was a laugh and this a sob."

There was a cardboard Santa in the second-hand toy shop that she passed; and, looking up at him, she said bitterly, "A Merry Christmas to you, old man . . . maybe that's possible for you." And ironically, the Santa still kept looking at her and smiling and nodding his head.

Soon afterward a carol, sounding soft and clear and bell-like on the frosty air, spoke to Noel of Christmas. Yet each time she scarcely noticed, until finally a small, poorly clad boy thrust himself in her path, asking, "Would you

buy some holly, ma'am?" But Noel brushed past him as she was brushing past all thought of Christmas.

"This is not Christmas," she kept thinking. "No Christmas could be like this." She walked more slowly now, her steps plodding dully; and with each step came thoughts plodding dully within her mind.

By this time Noel had reached the waterfront. It stretched below her, a black mass filled with strange shaped monsters that were rocked with a slapping sound by baby waves. In the distance the light of a buoy bobbed helplessly. And occasionally, when the wind was right, Noel heard the surly voices of men in the waterfront saloons; but they were far from her.

She was standing quite close to the edge of the wharf when the stranger first spoke to her. His words came softly, "Don't do that, Noel."

Now people will tell you that a person, supposing herself alone, as Noel did, would have been so terrified by hearing a stranger suddenly speak to her that she would have screamed or thrown herself into the water or turned upon him quickly to try to force an escape. But Noel did none of these. Perhaps it was because she was in a sort of trance. . . . Perhaps it was because of the calmness in the voice. She could feel the man close behind her. Yet she did not turn, but only remained staring into the darkness ahead.

The voice continued reprovingly, "Noel, you know that this is Christmas Eve, and you would die tonight. You are seeking death because you do not know how to believe. You do not know that there are others whose burdens are almost too heavy to bear. And yet because these people have a belief founded on the love brought by Him whose birthday we commemorate tomorrow, they do not seek to die tonight, but, rather, they would live. And in their homes on this Christmas Eve you will find the most joyous Christmas spirit."

There was silence following his words. The night seemed to be growing colder. The wind blew more strongly across the water to the

land. At last the stranger spoke again, "You wish to tell me something, Noel."

"Yes," she said. "And yet, what use is there? You know already of the play, don't you?"

And in his turn the stranger answered, "Yes. And of the sister who is ill, for whom you needed money. Of hopes, dreams, ambitions of early youth. Of the ability that is yours. Of a trip to the 'big city' to make good. Of defeat again today . . . the refusal of the best you had to give. Yes, Noel, I know you pretty well. You see, I know also of a weakness . . . the weakness that brought you to this place tonight. You were a coward, Noel, only because you had no belief to give you courage. Oh, you profess to believe—believe in God. Yet I tell you that your belief is not strong enough."

Noel swayed a little against the heavy impact of a sudden rush of wind. The stranger moved closer to steady her. Now the waves were growing stronger, tugging at the buoy, for moments hiding it completely from the shore, then thrusting it high again, a pinnacle of light against the sky.

At last Noel spoke in answer. "I thought perhaps *you* would understand; for you have known all that I might tell you. It was not for lack of courage that I chose this end; but only because I have no hope . . . I am defeated. I had failed so often. . . . This was my last. . . . It too has failed. This death is no new thought with me. It is ironical perhaps that it should come at Christmas time when happiness is supposed to prevail. But is not life itself ironical? 'Believe,' you say. How *can* I believe when I am met on every hand with failure?"

Her voice was unshaken by emotion. Rather she spoke in a dull, lifeless monotone. Her breathing was deep now. No longer did the sharp air bring pain into her breast.

"This is the best way," she continued. "Another step or two or three and I am part of the 'forgotten ages'. Very easy . . . better for the world, I guess . . . certainly better for me."

"And the sister?"

"There is a little money. . . . I left a note on

the table. She'll find it when she wakes. Not a very good Christmas present, maybe." Then with a laugh, "Why don't you go and tell *her* something about this 'believing' business? I've chosen my end. . . Maybe she could use it."

The stranger only smiled sadly at the laugh. It seemed as though he had been struck by something crueler than a whip. His voice was scarcely more than a whisper when he spoke to her, "Noel, you have all eternity after this. Will you give me an hour before?"

Now for the first time Noel turned to face the man. He looked like any other man, she thought. Yet if you had asked her to describe him, she would have said, "I couldn't see him, for I looked first into his eyes."

"Come with me," he said gently; and, as a child, she placed her hand in his.

Slowly he led her back from the wharf along streets she had never seen before . . . damp, dismal alleys, permeated by the stench of rotted food. Once she shivered, and he took off his coat and placed it around her shoulders. "Are you tired?" he asked.

And she answered, "No."

They did not hurry; yet it seemed they had walked very far when they came to some steps winding down to the basement of a battered building. A huge beer hall and game house on the main floor, filling the night with tumult, as rowdy drinkers celebrated Christmas.

"I want to show you," the stranger explained.

Carefully he guided her down the cement steps to the landing. From there they could look into the open room that was a home.

"Your room is not this bad?" he asked. "You have a little heat, a little food, warm clothes."

"Who are they?" she asked, seeking to escape the accusation of his words.

"Just people," he answered. "Just a factory worker and his family . . . a wife . . . two children . . . four and six. . . He lost his job today. This is the third time in six months. These plants are closing now . . . no place to get materials. He had to tell her tonight, and this is Christmas Eve, Noel."

"And the children?" her voice questioned.

"Last week they wrote to Santa Claus—a new doll, a wagon, a dress and sweater. Look at the chair beside their cot . . . two stockings. Tomorrow they will hold what Santa brought—a stick of peppermint, an orange, and a nut."

"But I don't understand," Noel insisted. "He didn't need to come home and see that disappointment. He's young . . . there were other ways."

"You are thinking weakly again, Noel," the stranger warned. "He is not through. They both are confident . . . another chance. See now, my dear, they have begun their Christmas. Now they pray."

"And now . . . a candle. I do not understand," Noel questioned.

"A white candle on the table. See now how the young father lights it . . . just a cheap candle, but burning for all men to know its message. Wherever men burn a white candle at Christmas time, it is a sign of hope—of belief in God. Here among the poorest of the poor the candle burns." As the stranger ceased speaking, there was a smile of radiant joy upon his face. Then finally, he sighed and whispered, "Come on, Noel; there are others."

Again he led her onward. This time they left the confusion of city buildings and walked along a street whose sides were lined with trees. Noel sensed somehow that they had passed into another town. She thought to question him; but by then they had stopped before a tiny cottage, in front of which stood huge skeletons of black—the bare limbs of aged trees. On the door there hung a wreath of holly leaves and berries; and through a window could be seen a Christmas tree, covered with burning lights of every hue.

"And these . . . who are they?" Noel asked.

"I shall show you," was the stranger's reply. "Come to the window, Noel. Tell me what you see."

"A child," she answered. "A boy not more than ten years old. He's sitting by the table that holds the tree. And, oh . . . why he has . . ."

"Yes, Noel, what else?"

"He has a pair of crutches on the floor beside him."

"Perhaps I should tell you the story even though it is an old one . . . how he was walking to school one day when he saw a little child run in front of a truck . . . how he ran into the street, pushed the child out of danger, and had his own legs crushed by the merciless wheels. Yesterday the doctor said he'd never be able to walk alone again. His Christmas present was a new pair of crutches. See how proudly he handles them. Look, Noel," he insisted, for she had turned her head away and had begun to cry softly. "Look! He's coming toward the window. See what he is doing."

Noel turned her head again and watched the boy. He had struggled to his feet, and had begun to drag himself toward the window. When finally he reached it, he sank wearily into the chair, and looked out into the blackness of the sky. Then she saw him draw something from his pocket, and a moment later he had placed upon the windowsill a lighted candle.

The stranger smiled again. "A boy who'll never walk alone again," he said.

Suddenly Noel found that she was tired. If the stranger had asked her again, she would have said, "Yes, I'm tired. Please let me rest." Yet he did not ask, but only put his arm about her to help her stand. For a long while she walked with her head down . . . her eyes staring at the ground. At last when she looked up, she found that they had left the village street and were approaching a great stone mansion high upon a hill. They were passing along a drive that wound its way from the highway below to the front door. They had not even arrived at the house when Noel asked, "Who is this?"

"You will know soon," the stranger replied.

Finally they reached the house and stood outside a huge window through whose glass they could see shining the myriad lights of a tree that stretched tall and mighty to touch the ceiling of the room. Noel gasped breathlessly.

"It is beautiful," the stranger said. Then after a pause, "In this house there lives a woman whom fate has constantly tried to overcome.

She was married just before the last war. Her husband died in France five months later. Then she had a son. She had inherited her husband's entire estate so that she was able to give the boy every opportunity that money could bring. Through the years he has become her very life . . . the center of her being. Two months ago he was sent overseas with the air corps. Today she received word that he had been killed in action."

"Killed," Noel echoed bitterly.

"This is Christmas Eve for her too, Noel," the stranger said. "The guests in her house tonight are boys in the air corps. Look more closely. They are coming in to the tree."

Noel moved toward the window. She could see the tree more clearly now as it stood in stately magnificence, its trunk hidden by packages. And round the tree stood a group of boys in uniform . . . in their midst a woman whose face radiated love.

"One would not know seeing her now," said the stranger, turning to look at Noel. Then, as a smile came to her lips, he asked, "What do you see?"

"A candle."

"Yes, of course."

Noel left the stranger then and went to stand beneath the bare branches of a poplar tree at the entrance to the garden. She leaned against the sturdy trunk and looked upward. The moon was shining now, she noticed . . . beautiful upon the tree tops. After a while she felt the stranger's hand upon her arm. "My time is over," he said, and began to lead her away.

Neither of them spoke; for though they had walked a long way from the wharf, they had only to turn a corner, it seemed, to reach it again. He left her there just as he had found her . . . a few steps from the water . . . her thin form standing against the wind and cold.

In fact, she wasn't even sure just when he went. She had been standing looking at the water below when he said, "Thank you for an hour, Noel"; and when she turned, he was gone. From far down in town came the faint

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A Beast's Tale

"Aw, here, I top that one," laughed the red-headed buck private, dropping his knife in the potato basket. "You K.P.'s listen to this one! It's an old Nebraskan tale; but, man, does it apply!" Whereupon he threw up his hands and rolled his blue eyes knowingly.

"Once upon a time, in fact, very recently, there was a great, big, unsuspecting, innocent, and trusting shepherd dog, with wavy, red-brown hair and the sweetest of dispositions. Modestly speaking, I'd say he was about the best-looking shepherd dog for miles around. He had lovely blue eyes and cutest vague expression, which just slayed the women—well, at least his mama and his old maid aunts. He had a most charming personality, and all his little sheep just adored him. But he never missed with women. Somehow he just never had time.

"Now one day when this noble dog lay smelling the yellow daisies in his pasture, he thought how refreshing it would be to take a stroll in the dark woods, a part of town in which he had never ventured. It was—ahem!—across the tracks. The more he thought of the idea, the better he liked it. And, putting aside all conscience, he rose up, shook himself in anticipation, and stepped proudly toward the forest.

"The outskirts were dark and dim. Huge trees covered the entrance, but the determined dog pushed through. Suddenly his ears pricked up. He heard the rasping of a jook. Sniffing with his wide nostrils, he shimmied forward to a great hollow trunk and nuzzled at the swinging door. A beady eye peeped through a knothole and looked up and down his shiny gold coat. 'Come in, come in,' boomed a fat old fox, swinging wide the door. 'Strangers are always welcome—especially,' and he raised his eyebrows, 'those of your calibre.' The shepherd dog felt very flattered and blushed from his nose to the very tip of his long, bushy tail. Then, assuming an air of complete noncha-

lance, he strolled into the bar room.

"At the back of the room through a haze of smoke was a long wooden bar. Behind it a pink pig poured scuppernong wine to himself—and to the patrons. From somewhere in the corner 'Tobacco-Spittin' Rabbit' blared forth in jazzy tones. Crude tables and benches were slung here and there—filled with sputtering bears and stuffed hyenas. The place seemed quite unique to the shepherd dog as he seated himself in a quiet corner. He ordered the wine, and settled back to enjoy himself.

"Suddenly the music dimmed, and the spotlight shone on a door in the back. And the most amazing thing happened. The prettiest little kitty walked right out of that door. She was a shiny black kitten with the softest white stripe running right down the middle of her back and up her tail. And she had the deepest black eyes. The kind shepherd dog jumped right up to his feet, and then sat down again. He didn't want to be conspicuous. And the little kitty looked right at him and began to sing. Her song was most unhappy. Someone had had the nerve to hurt this poor little kitty's heart. The chivalric shepherd dog was indignant at the thought. The idea of anyone's harming her! He bolted right out the front door, before the song was even ended. Why, he would fix things! He would take this poor innocent creature away from such an environment. He would take her to the sunshine again. And with that—he strolled to the stage door—and waited patiently for her arrival. And by some stroke of luck, the lovely creature tripped on the doorstep and fell into his arms—right against his big velvet purse. She shrank back in alarm, but as she later said, seeing his dear kind eyes, she fell sobbing on his houlder. The dog was moved with compassion and carried the black and white kitty out to the edge of the meadow where he found a home for her.

"The shepherd dog's life was different after

that. Somehow he had something to cherish. Although he never dared mention it, he thought he was in love. He spent all his wealth in making the little kitty happy. In the mornings he let her pay among the daisies. He bought her pretty clothes and took her only to the very best places. He fed her on nectar and honey. And he gave her everything he had. He was very happy. And she was so grateful.

"But one day a police dog, dressed in dull-est khaki barked across the field that the shepherd dog was drafted. The fine dog was stunned. He would be a buck private—earning ten dollars a month in the Wags. He couldn't be with the little kitty anymore. But the kitty was lovely. She said she could stand it if she stayed there with all his things. She even offered to take care of his money. And she let him deed his house to her. Oh, she was very brave, and she even kissed him goodbye!

"Ah, boys, but here my story reacheth its

point! The good, kind shepherd dog arrived at camp. There were no letters from his little sweetheart. Two months in the Wags—and still no word. He was heartbroken. Perhaps she was ill. He asked his mother, who somehow had never approved, to investigate. The little black kitty with the white stripe up her tail had eloped with a sleek, gray wolf, who, incidentally, had a booming defense job, a 4-F classification, and a long, cream convertible.

"Which all goes to prove—," and Red shrugged his shoulders elaborately—

"That a woman's heart turneth where Fortune shines!" sighed a dark haired private, staring into the air.

"And you'd better turn out those potatoes!" bellowed the top sergeant from the doorway. "Darn that Maggie," he muttered as he stumbled down the steps. "Why'n the dickens don't she write?"

—MARTHA RUMBLE

POEM

*She stands
In beauty, truth, and love
A symbol of what
God intended
For the world
And all the people
Gather together
And say
"Isn't she nice?"*

—MARY COLLINS

A TALK ABOUT BRITAIN

The subject of a British-American alliance in the post-war world has been discussed far and wide by the great men of both countries. Being a mere student, I am pitifully unequipped either to strengthen or contradict their views; therefore I shall recount a few of the differences between the British and the Americans that I, as a student, have observed.

The most important one is the contrasting reserve and informality of the two nationalities. All my life I have been with people who, while they probably know the rules of etiquette well enough, did not go out of their way to *employ* them in everyday life. The Britons' constant display of formality in everything from teas to parades is sometimes quite amusing to me, often even confusing, but always there. However, I believe the British reserve goes even deeper than etiquette. It can be seen in all British actions. An American boy or girl will try a new jitterbug step, bring a guest home for dinner unexpectedly, or give a war whoop without the slightest hesitation. A Briton might do one of these, but he would hold back until he had thought it out carefully first. All his life he has been taught to keep rein on himself, lest he become over-demonstrative. Our American way is to be warm, impulsive. An Englishman tends to be cool, even though his hospitality is always abundant, and his tact far surpasses ours.

The English are great lovers of titles, family backgrounds, and the solid assurance of their own land beneath them. Few of them choose to give up their rambling old family mansions, often cold and damp, for more comfortable quarters. To an Englishman, the ability to say that he, his father, and his father's father have lived in this house is worth sacrificing the comfort of a modern, convenient house to obtain. Americans are constantly moving, for a change of scenery, if nothing else.

There are only a few American families in which the "Old Home Place" means anything but a faded snapshot. Americans are fond of change, of revising the old to keep pace with the new. Englishmen will sit for hours recalling events of their ancestors' lives, even though they be but commonplace tales of men being born, living their lives out in one spot, and dying there. Americans will reminisce for hours, too, but they remember events in their own lives, or those of their buddies. An Englishman will repeat the titles his family has held. An American will tell of the honors he has received. The young nation of America is interested in the new, fast-moving modern age, while the older, more settled Britain is prouder of its past accomplishments than of its present ones. This does not mean that each country will not do equally well in a crisis. It simply illustrates the contrast between the young, who are vigorous, and looking always for new games of skill to try, as compared with the more experienced, who are willing to sit on the sidelines and dream a bit of past-won laurels until a really worthwhile game begins.

Last, the Americans are unlike the British in the way they view their opportunities. To an American boy it seems that nothing is impossible. In this world of miracles he has but to take his pick of vocations, and work up in a few years time of being a millionaire or a president. An English boy is ambitious, but he understands from his childhood that he will take a vocation picked for him by his family. He wishes to do well, but he wastes no time dreaming idly of fortunes to be made overnight or of public offices to be given him upon a week's notice. America produces a man who progresses from the position of a tiny tobacco warehousekeeper to a huge trust president in a lifetime, and calls him typical of our youth.

(Continued on page 28)

IF—WITH APOLOGIES TO KIPLING

*If you can't keep your mind on those around you
When they are talking to you,
If you can carry on a conversation
But meanwhile sit and daydream too
If you can wait for him an hour
And not be mad when he arrives
Or staring at your history lesson
See only his brown eyes.*

*If in the lab, mitosis phases
All look alike to you
If the way he looked last time you saw him
Haunts everything you do.
If you don't know about de Montfort
Or what happened in 333,
Or while the English professor reviews the
themes
You are gazing outside at a tree.*

*If you get a funny feeling down inside you
At the mention of his name.
If when you play soccer, you simply can't bring
Your thoughts from him to the game.
If when the phone rings you feel disappoint-
ment
Because it's only your Dad
Then Cupid's arrow has found its mark
And you've really got it bad.*

—ANN STRAIN

GO AND CATCH A FALLING STAR

She looked up into the summer night. Stars smiled back at her, silent and understanding. Suddenly, one star separated itself from the rest, plunged across the heavens in a flash of sparkling light; then was gone. Feeling to make sure the letter was safe beside her, the girl leaned back in the cool grass, and reflected solemnly.

Her name was Valerie. She was madly in love with Chuck! Chuck was her husband. Often Valerie's father would say to her, "Valerie, when are you going to stop being a bride . . . and become a wife?" Valerie would only smile. She knew that that would take years and years. At least she hoped so. Never in this world could she imagine settling down and taking her married status for granted. No, not Valerie. The whole thing was all too wonderful. And Chuck . . . well . . . he was perfect. All her family was crazy about him. Everyone told Valerie that she was very lucky to have nabbed such an eligible young man, with good looks, charm, social position, a vice-presidency in his family's Marlin Flour Mills waiting for him when he came back. Then those same people always added so many other really immaterial things about her husband. Chuck was in the Air Corps; the Army Air Corps. He was a fighter pilot. He was overseas, leaving "poor, brave Valerie" home alone with her family. He was also a captain. "But how was I to know he was so important when I met him?" Valerie always innocently asked.

Their meeting had been one such as you read about. It had happened at one of the formal dances at the Officer's Club, when Valerie was floating over the dance floor with numerous partners. Chuck had cut in, and nonchalantly informed her that he was going to take control of the ship . . . meaning her, of course. Valerie laughed in remembrance. She had been shocked for a moment, then had come to life . . . and from that night on Valerie swore she



began to live again. For Chuck did take over the controls; he squired her everywhere. He brought her flowers, he brought her candy, he brought her perfume. Valerie walked on pink clouds.

Then Chuck married her—That had been the best of all—A church wedding with softly gleaming candles, her parents and Chuck's parents sitting side by side, the reception afterwards when all she wanted was to be with Chuck. Then there was the rice episode. Valerie could never forget how they had walked composedly into the elegant hotel, feeling as though they had been married for years. Her new husband had grinned at her, at the people in the lobby, at the clerk behind the desk. He had taken off his cap to sign the book "Captain and Mrs. Charles Marlin" . . . when it happened. A deluge of rice descended upon them, upon the clerk, all over the soft green carpet on the floor. Chuck's cap had had more under it than anyone guessed! Everyone laughed over that; and one of the onlookers had sent an aged bottle of champagne to their room, with a note of congratulations. Valerie still had the note. And Chuck had said he was so glad that they weren't the only ones who enjoyed their honeymoon!

"Oh, Chuck . . . when're you coming back?" she whispered softly to the sky. She did miss him so terribly, terribly much. Somewhere he was flying up there among the stars, over some foreign land. He would be alone, because fighter pilots operate alone, without a crew. What would Chuck be thinking now? Valerie grasped the letter firmly as though it were her husband's hand she held.

Captain Charles Marlin was wishing fervently that he hadn't gotten separated from the other planes in that last dog fight. But he had gotten the Jerry. Now the only flaw in the circumstance was the fact that he hadn't the slightest idea of his location. Well, he could find his way by the stars. No matter what man-made instruments were destroyed in battle, the stars were always there to guide him. Right now they were shining all around him. Valerie should be here, he thought. When that idea hit him he burst into song with Valeri-ee, my darling . . . Valeri-e-e-e, my de-e-ear . . . since one night, when sta-a-rs danced above, I'm oh . . . oh-so in lo-ohuv . . . A movement caught his eye. Don't the Jerries ever get any rest?

Evidently not . . . a whole drove of 'em coming "Okay," said Captain Charles Marlin, "see if you can catch me!"

"Catch a falling star . . ." That's what he told me today. Valerie remembered every word of the letter . . . "fill every moment, Valerie . . . remember it . . . live it for both of us . . . until I get back . . ."

"I will, Chuck . . . I will . . ." It seemed to Valerie that she was right up there in that blue yonder with him. Why, she . . . she could even hear him! He was singing. "Chuck, I can hear you . . . I can!"

"Valerie . . . Valerie . . . Valerie . . . they're getting much too close now. Valerie, honey . . . watch those stars . . ." And Captain Charles Marlin set his sights on the nearest of the enemy aircraft.

Valerie Walker Marlin sat straight up against the tree. Her whole body stiffened. In one hand she clutched the letter tightly, as she stared skyward. One star had separated itself from the rest, plunged across the heavens in a flash of sparkling light; and was gone. . . .

—PEGGY HALLIBURTON.

SUSTAINING FORCE

*Sorrow, sadness, death, and pain . . .
So much has come
I wonder my heart is still alive.
Wickedness, sin, hatred, lust . . .
So much is here
I wonder my spirit is still in me;
Yet both remain strong,
Held high by the hand of God.*

—MARGY RAGAN

THAT BLUE LADY vs. THAT BLUE GAL

"Sorry, Gal," he telephoned hurriedly, "I can't see you tonight, as we'd planned. You see, honey, I have an unbreakable date with the blue lady upstairs."

"Yes, dear, I understand," I replied, "please have a thrilling time, but hurry back to me."

"Hypocrite," I thought as I spoke, "you don't understand, and you don't want him to go. Why, woman, you're jealous."

And I guess I was! The blue lady is such a terribly bewildering rival. If she were some daffy blonde, I could calmly hit her in the head or just boil her in oil. Yet what could be done with this lady, who is not just a heavenly body, but all the heavens themselves rolled into one?

My troubles being too much for me, I sat down beside my complex to brood about powerful her and puny me—about the dynamic, magnetic lady who lures young, light-hearted men, who beckons and knows they will obey, who has never known the meaning of a broken date.

"Could I but be a tiny star in the hem of her garment," I thought, "then I could be a minute part of her beauty. Then I could have a share in her magnetic loveliness."

In a moment of wishful thinking, I wondered if I might acquire some of her charm. But no, my limitations were too painfully obvious. My poise, my bearing, my gown could never compare to hers. And as to personality, mine was non-existent in the light of her glow.

Closing my eyes, I drew a picture of imaginary me, the essence of feminine charm—me wearing the misty blue and back gown with the tiny spangled stars flung against the skirt, me with tiny mirror earrings that catch the light and toss it back like a golden boomerang, me with soft chiffon about my shoulders, with love mist in my eyes and a hint of perfume in my hair.

But I groaned as another picture pushed its way rudely into my mind—*her* in that gown of deep, rich velvet folds of ever-changing blue,

her with living stars carelessly caressing her womanly ears and nestling snugly in her misty hair, her with the softest cloud veil flung carelessly about her shoulders. The "me" was reduced to a mere shadow.

Imagination and jealous admiration tugged at my thoughts and jerked them further from reality. I heard her calling to "him", gently, constantly, distinctly, "Come, play with me. Tangle yourself in my veil and twine my hair about you. Feel my coolness and my softness. Forget those earthly, human creatures. Come, play with me."

What I envied most about this sky, this blue lady, was her incessant change—change of color, change of tone, change of mood. Never the same, but always lovely, she looks as if she has a limitless wardrobe of velvet and stars. With her endless supply of fine perfumes, she bears a teasing mist-like fragrance. Her changing, moody nature is the keynote of her character. One moment she is laughing, like the smooth, contented murmur of a brook, unimpeded by rocks and debris. Now she chuckles, as she wins over a new victim to her wiles. When she is rebuffed, she throws back her shoulders, grumbles angrily, and lashes her lightning whip. In quieter moments, she remains poised, calm, and self-possessed, to allow her wilder emotions to subside and regenerate energy and sparkle.

—The ring of the doorbell rushed my imagination back to my surroundings. But the sound of his voice in the hall made me question reality.

"Hey, lady," he called, "flying orders were changed. 'Scuse me for barging in like this."

I stared unbelievably. He called me *lady*. *She* had not won him, after all!

"Bu-u-t," I stammered, "my rival—the blue lady—"

Laughing, he caught my hand and said, "Rival—not a chance—you're so warm and human, dear."

—MARY SMITH

SOMEBODY'S CHILDREN

Among all the ravages of war, the destruction of buildings, death of innumerable soldiers and broken homes, perhaps the most outstanding is the thought of small children bombed from their homes and separated forever from their parents by a screeching shell. The sight of a young boy or girl, homeless, alone and lost, brings tears to the eyes of many and inspiration to the poet and artist. One of the most effective of the war posters is the boy with a Distinguished Service Cross around his neck and a Captain's bars in his hand.

But neither poet nor artist is able to paint the story of the thousands of children whose lives will be changed because of invading armies and a memorable December 7. The starving child of Greece, the freezing child of Russia, the praying child of Italy, and the puzzled child of Britain and America, they are the ones who will pay the price of this war not only in blood and tears but in days of longing for a real home and someone to understand. The monetary loss will be great, but greatly exceeding it will be the loss of home and family. The war orphans may be adopted; large homes will be founded for them; nevertheless, all the well-meaning people, all the money in the world cannot compare to the spiritual and temporal guidance of a mother or father. A bed in a dormitory will never take the place of a cozy room; a hundred boys and girls will fail to

fill the places of brothers and sisters.

In addition to the orphan who loses his parents by death in the war, there is the one whose father and mother are lost from him in the business of producing war materials. Though these children are far away from the shattering of bombs and the actual fighting, the swing shift and time and half-time are the menaces which threaten them. In the accelerated work-day, son and daughter are unintentionally neglected. Mother no longer has time to fix Jean's dress; she has more important work at the plant. Dad would like to help Johnny work that math, but that particular night is the only time he has to figure his income tax. Parents think the problem is solved when they find a good nursery school which often is the beginning of trouble. Taking a small child from a quiet home to a crowded school usually is too quick a break.

In the last war people were fighting to make the world safe for democracy; this time, to make a sane world for their children to grow up in. But unless these orphans find skillful guiding hands in the midst of this turmoil, their minds will become warped and they will feel alone in the world. These orphans must be helped as if they belonged to us, for they have known the pleasures of a real home. They must not be thought of as unemotional boys and girls, for they are somebody's children.

—ANN STRAIN.

SHE MUST HAVE BRIBED THE GODS

Started back in '40. A blind date—a '33 Ford—a ride up 12th Street and plop it hit her. 'Twas Cupid's biting arrow zinging from Mt. Olympus tearing a hole in Jr's sentimental soul. From then till the day Hal hooked her, Jr. chased him from the pool hall to the "strong liquid refreshment establishment" and back to the pool hall and so ad infinitum. Finally after tears and poetry and years of unrequited passion, he succumbed and under a hypnotic spell proposed—uttered those seven magic words, "I love you. Will you marry me?" Not wanting to seem too anxious, Jr.—as a Svengali—snagged her prey and coyly cried "Yes, YES, YES! Oh, say it again, darling. How long have you loved me? I love you, too. I guess it's because you've loved me so-o-o long that you've transmitted that love to me. When shall we get married? Next week?"

Practically drowned by the deluge and coming suddenly to consciousness, poor Hal realized what he had done. Not wanting to back down altogether—oh, valiant Hal—he croaked, "Don't you think we're too young to get married? Shouldn't we wait ten or twelve years? You know we don't want to rush into this thing with our eyes closed."

"A compromise—I suggest a compromise," sang she, "how's that?" "OK," spake he. "Only six years—huh?"

"Oh, no — next month, precious — my lion cub. Next month. Nov. 28th. Won't everyone be just stunned?"

"Yeah, and they won't be the only ones!"

. . . The oracle had spoken . . .

Juno stepped in and in her jealous way stirred up a little trouble—inferior only to the siege of Troy. Pre-groom and bride were pricked for blood drops and same were sent to Lansing. Returns were 'sposed to have been back in three days. One week — two weeks — three weeks passed. Three days before the wedding



and still no report on status of corpuscles, etc. Wedding license couldn't be issued until three days after tests were in the hands of the law.

Worry—worry—worry! Grey hairs were popping out on Jr's cranium; the little lines in Hal's forehead were smoothing out and relief was wiping the consternation from his brow. But he was doomed. Jr. went to court to get a waiver. Nothing could be done without blood tests. A little shyster was consulted. Well, for them he'd do it for \$25.00—\$25.00 and that was all they had to spend on their extended honeymoon of three days. (Somebody, check your numbers' books. Is "3" unlucky?) Jr. cogitated and decided it was possible to be married without a honeymoon, but a honeymoon without a wedding? Could be—but unless legally leashed Hal might bark and bolt back to the good ole pool hall pound.

Then with soothing, syrupy, sticky phrases, Jr. trapped her man; roped and dragged him down to the medico's for further studies of

(Continued on page 26)

PLANS

*Plans! Plans for the future
When no one knows
What tomorrow brings.*

*Plans! What right have I
To make plans? My life
Is no more my own.
Uncertain! What tomorrow brings.*

*Plans! Why should I
Make plans when tomorrow I may be
Lying dead. Just another pair of "dog tags" in
the dust.
While Mars stalks along his gruesome way.
Ugly—what tomorrow brings.*

*Plans! I had made plans
But now they lie shattered, torn,
Crumbling like the ruins of an
Ancient castle. Gone to be no more.
All that is real is the noise of guns.
Hopeless—what tomorrow brings.*

*Plans! But, Soldier, you should be
Making plans. Not to die, but to
Come marching home with the light
Of victory in those eyes. Home to
Rebuild, to live, to be loved by those
Who love you. For there is
Hope for what tomorrow brings.*

—EFFIE THORNTON

LIVING MEMORIAL

Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today. Paul Cavell crashed today. Over and over the statement rings in my head. It seems to pound on the inside of my skull, trying to get out. I wish it would. Paul Cavell crashed today. When I had heard the news, I was put to bed; and Father came up to say in his usual sweet simplicity that he was sorry. People do not mention it to me because they hate to remind me—remind me! I cannot forget for a second. Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today, and I want to talk about it—want to tell someone. Maybe then the pressure of the heavy memory would lessen, and the thought would only whisper itself to me instead of screaming so loudly.

Every time I close my eyes I see him as he was yesterday—vitaly alive—his eyes a pair of smiling, twinkling blue diamonds, his head the blond fuzz of a crew-cut, his mouth a constant smile, revealing hard white teeth. But that is no more—Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today. Yesterday we were swimming together, laughing and playing in the sun. I can still see his tan, muscular body diving into blue waters—strong arms pulling ripples into the smooth surface . . . and the splash I made following after to duck him playfully for making us late for our swim. He was always a little vague about the time and place of things. We had waited for an hour and a half for Bruce, a fellow instructor, to come and pick us up. All this time Bruce was waiting at the pool for us because Pepper had told him we would meet him there in the first place. You forgave Pep for those mental mix-ups though, because they were just a part of him. Part of him! Pepper is gone—Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today! Someone told me while I was at work, and they sent me home.

Bruce called me from the Air Base to tell me more details. I felt an impelling need to know more than just the fact that Pepper had

crashed. Bruce's story was a little jerky but he told me—Paul Cavell, one of the best naval instrument instructors—out practicing strafing runs with a new student—they dove at a field—the student misjudged—Pep pulled them out suddenly—too suddenly—the plane stalled—and went into the ground tail first—he didn't know what hit him—it was too quick.

The radio announcer merely stated, "Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today. It was the first crash at the base in two years." A terse statement—but look what lies behind it. Pepper had eight brothers and sisters—so many people to grieve! His mother has been ill with heart trouble for years—how awful for her—and the boys at the base—many of their friends have crashed before but they have never been affected in this way by the loss. There was something different about Paul, something magnificent, and everyone knew it the minute they saw him. It was not that he was the richest boy, or the smartest, or the best golfer or swimmer—he never won the first place in any of those things, but that is one of the reasons he won the first place in life and in everyone's heart. No one had cause to be jealous of Paul or to envy him any ability or possession—yet no one could find reason to look down on him, because he had proved time and again that he was the best loser around. One of his classmates at Notre Dame told me that Paul tried his best and did everything well, but that the only loving cup he had ever known him to win was the one for being the best sport. That is the way it was about life, too. When he lost his life he had done his best at living and therefore was best prepared for dying. No one held a grudge against him. Everyone who had been around him for even a few minutes loved him; and, above all, his heart was close to God.

Ensign Paul Cavell crashed today. For a minute my thoughts had made him live again,

but I must remember that he is gone. But why? Of all the people there he least deserved such a fate. What reason could God find to take him? Why couldn't it have been someone who was not quite so good—that did not mean quite as much to so many people? It seems unjust but there must be a purpose.

Pepper always went to the Tuesday night dances that a group of girls gave for the entertainment of the servicemen. He went there looking for me; but I was seldom there because other things, while they were less patriotic, were more fun. Just a few minutes ago one of the girls that is a close friend of mine—was of Pepper's—called. She was almost as tearful as I. One thing stands out clearly above the words of sympathy, above the sadness. She said, "Let's promise to go to every one of those Tuesday night dances and entertain those boys—for Pepper." That is a small beginning of the things I must do because of him memory. I will try to do everything just a little better—for him—to be more like him—to have his calm, simple philosophy, that made him so steady—to be an inspiration to those around me. My decision is noble but—Ensign Paul

Cavell crashed today—the boy I loved is dead. I will try to fulfill the purpose that God meant when he took him. But how can I, when my heart is so tight with pain? How can I go out on Tuesday night to dance and smile at those boys and make them happy when that statement pounds out its tempo inside my head—Paul Cavell crashed today, Paul Cavell crashed, Paul Cavell—To go there Tuesday and see a boy's broad uniformed back; to start to smile in recognition, only to realize that when that boy turns around it will not be Pepper smiling back—I remember now the most familiar thing about Pepper. I used to say to him, "Every time I see you I just have to smile." He would look down at me and say seriously, "That's just what I want you to do, always." Paul Cavell crashed today. That sentence is a whisper now. It will be a long time before the whisper completely disappears. It probably never will, but it will no longer bring tears to scald my eyes because when I have a vision of Paul Cavell in my mind, I will smile at it—the way he wanted me to—always. There will be sweetness in the memory—not pain.

—MARGY RAGAN.

The J. W. Burke Co.

Printers



406 CHERRY ST.

MACON, GA.

TEN MINUTES FROM ZERO

Characters: Though clothes do not generally make the man, in this play, a khaki shirt makes, and is, the men. If you do not have a man serving in the war, don't take the trouble to get acquainted with these people.

Time: Maybe now, maybe any other month the past year, 1942.

Place: A barracks room of raw boards and elementary furniture—a square table, an ugly steel cot, three sturdy chairs, a steel locker, green, and cornered. On the table, a strong-bulbed, utilitarian lamp; on back wall, right, a gaudy soft-drink calendar. The calendar is balanced on the other side by a bulletin board crowded with official onion-skinned notices. To the right of the table, a large, poker-faced window reveals interminable rows of similar barracks, made of similar militant, disciplined rooms.

Curtain: Stage is dim except for a circle of colorless light from the study lamp. As the curtain rises, an expensive khaki shirt descends and settles on the back of a chair at the upper right. The shirt has two sharp folds in front,

three across the back, and it looks very, very empty.

When Charles enters from left, the khaki shirt is still moving, as if a breeze might be marching through the big window.

Clad only in loosely belted khaki pants and a white undershirt, the man crosses, lifts the garment and begins to struggle into it. He is whistling softly. (Men know how Charles gets into the shirt; a good wife knows how a man looks putting on a shirt; a girl with brothers stares to see if men really do manage to get shirts on that way. If you don't know how a man gets into a shirt, watch this one. Some lives are too sheltered.)

Leaving his collar turned back open at the throat, Charles removes a rifle from the locker, and saunters to the window to prop on the sill. He is still whistling. From his pocket, he takes a jewelry box, and looks from it out the window, way beyond the interminable rows of disciplined rooms.

From across stage, a lieutenant enters—a small, waddling man. Lt. Hopper waddles because his legs are too short for walking.

* * *

SCENE I

Hopper: Martin!

Charles [*standing erect*]: Yessir!

Lt. Hopper [*thrusting official onion-skinned report forward*]: Delayed orders. Your furlough postponed.

Charles: But, sir—

Lt. Hopper [*waving hand*]: Relax, man. And get some of that stuff out of your hand. You look like the postman with a C.O.D. package.

Charles: Yessir. [*He thrusts jewelry box into his back pocket, and puts the notice on the table.*]

Lt. Hopper: Now, according to orders ef-

fective as of today, you leave on furlough five weeks from today. Let's see—take guard duty Thursday night, Martin.

Charles: Sir, I'd like to request—

Lt. Hopper: Don't want duty that night?

Charles: No, sir, I—

Lt. Hopper: Why?

Charles: Until you came in a few minutes ago, Thursday was to be—

Lt. Hopper: Night for a big fling? Celebration? Plenty of liquor?

Charles: No liquor on my wedding night, sir.

[*Lt. Hopper flings his cap to the cot, rumples his deep-waved, deep brown hair, and sits at the*

table]: H-mm-m, ahem! [*Men, confused embarrassed, uncertain, always harumph.*] This Thursday, you say?

Charles: Yessir.

Lt. Hopper: You are excused for ten minutes to send your girl a telegram.

Charles [*tonelessly*]: Sir, there's no chance of—??

Lt. Hopper: Sorry, Martin. Uncle Sam doesn't give a damn for your romance. Eight minutes left.

[*The folds in the shirt—two in front and three across the back—fade, because the khaki shirt no longer looks very, very empty.*]

Charles: Lieutenant?

Lt. Hopper: Yes?

Charles: What about man to man?

Lt. Hopper: All right, Martin. I like it that way, too.

Charles: I've got to have that leave, Joe.

Lt. Hopper: Know how you feel.

Charles: You mean you start thinking of Her too, when you see a full moon, or maybe when you go to church alone?

Lt. Hopper [*gruffly*]: Never think of Her at all. Just wear this ring because I can't get it off my fat finger now.

Charles: Please, Joe, don't bull now.

Lt. Hopper: Go ahead.

Charles: Her dad didn't want us to marry.

Lt. Hopper: Do they ever?!

Charles: I sat at his table for Christmas dinner, and he never spoke one word to me.

Lt. Hopper: Decent of 'im. Brotherly love he was showing.

Charles: Mary crumpled and suffered during that meal. I watched her eat wretchedness and shame. Christmas! Good will to men! God, it was hell!

Lt. Hopper: Why did the old man take it that far?

Charles: Protecting her.

Lt. Hopper: From?

Charles: A sick man—helplessly sick.

Lt. Hopper: You? [*It is hard to think of a laughing, sun-tanned man as sick—helplessly sick.*]

Charles: Naval Air Corps turned me down.

Discovered diabetes. I didn't know.

Lt. Hopper: Must be mild then, Martin, not hopeless.

Charles: In one of its worst stages, Joe. Army Air Corps laughed at me. Now it's Martin, private, with insulin. Had to beg to get in at all.

Lt. Hopper: Tough.

Charles: But Mary still cares. Enough to oppose and then to convince her daddy.

Lt. Hopper: That proves to me she does.

Charles: And we could have ten days.

Lt. Hopper: No more?

Charles: PE for me as soon as I get back.

Lt. Hopper: Well, ten days of married bliss, ten months of fighting hell, then ten life-times of happiness.

Charles: Nope. Medics give me six months—less in a spot where I can't get proper foods.

Lt. Hopper: Sissies! Alarmists, all of them!

Charles: I'm not fooling myself, Joe. That's why I still like living.

Lt. Hopper: Does Mary smile, Martin?

Charles: She likes living.

Lt. Hopper: Guts under a beautiful exterior, hm?

Charles: Everything! She's got everything I'm living for, lieutenant! [*He pounds the desk in his excitement.*] I've GOT to have her—Thursday!! [*R.H.I.P., love its power.*]

Lt. Hopper: Dam it man, that moon out there does get in my eyes!

Charles: Pardon?

Lt. Hopper: Can you leave at 2300 tonight?

Charles: You mean—??

Lt. Hopper: Right, Martin. I think I can fix it. Here you go, man. [*Lt. Hopper takes Martin's hand in a grip that says better than military phrases and formalities would allow, "God bless you, fellow."*]

Charles: 2300! Late hour. Close to the start of a new day. Oh. [*Comes back, mentally.*] Goodbye, sir. And, Joe—say—thanks!

[*Charles strides from the room with the khaki shirt gleaming across his erect shoulders. The lieutenant shakes his head, frowns, and begins to get his papers in order at the desk. Lights dim out.*]

SCENE II

[As the lights come back, a boy is seen, in a militant, disciplined room almost exactly like the first one. Against the steel locker in the corner leans a plane propeller. And through the poker-faced window a beacon flashes at intervals, hangars are glimpsed, and a trainer plane is seen idling on the runway. The boy, who looks like Martin must have looked three years ago, rumples his hair, chews staccato on his pencil, turns from a book to drawing instruments and a map on the table. He is interrupted by a ground-crew friend, who enters right.]

George: Whatsa' matter, Don? Can't cha' ride that beam on paper?

Don: Naw, 'cordin' to my expert calculations, the bloomin' beam's blinkin'! Mail come? George [*mincing*]: Mail come? Oh George, did the sun rise this morning? Lug, you know I wuz the first one to answer mail call! slug-lug! [*Don dodges a feint.*]

Don: Hey-y, cut it out! Your uncle doesn't want his nephews mutilatin' each other.

George: But he likes for them to get packages. Morale, y'know. Here, catch this one.

Don: Rajah! [*Grabs package and peers at the return address as he tears into the box.*] From Mrs. Chas. Martin. If sisters-in-law are this nice, why didn't my brother marry sooner?

[George watches eagerly as Don takes from the box a neatly folded khaki shirt—folded with two sharp creases in front and three across the back and looking very, very empty. A white envelope breaks the tan monotony above the left pocket.]

Don [*holding the shirt up for inspection*]: Gosh!—

George [*whistling — concentrated admiration*]: What a beauty!

Don: Let's see what the note says. [*While Don reads the note, George fingers the folds in the shirt, tries a button, measures sleeve length.*]

George: Well, did she think it wuz your birthday?

Don: No [*still looking at note*] No, uh-huh.

George: Buying family affection, then?

Don: No, something about how late 2300

is. And the end of a worn-out day meeting the start of a fresh new one.

George: Something sentimental and womanish, huh?

Don: Yeah. All I can make of it is Charles wanted her to send me the shirt. Brought him good luck. Meaning her.

George: Well, it sho' is a good-lookin' good luck piece. It will fit me, as well as you.

Don, [*ignoring George's sizeable hint*]: Good luck! I'll be needing it in a day or so.

George: Girl trouble?

Don: No, Lug. Solo!

George: You? That's a good one!

Don: What's the matter with that? I am gonna solo—by the end of the week.

George: Aw-w, you can't flap yo' wings that good yet.

Don: Don't forget, I made those doodle-bugs slow roll and say papa, even back at school.

George: I'm not forgetting, but that doesn't make a damn about your solo here!

Don, [*angrily*]: Well, dern it, I betcha it does!

George: It's safer to bet on the end of the next week for your time up.

Don: Aw, ol' Safe an' Sane, you gripe! I'll betcha my shirt I solo this Sunday!

George: Put your shirt where your mouth is. Do you mean that?

Don: I'll betcha my band-new, good luck shirt I solo Sunday. That's how sure I am.

George: I'll take yo' bet, Don. Since my furlough starts Monday, I could leave here tomorrow. But I'll stay over in town two days to watch this.

Don: O.K., shake. [*Lights dim out, denoting lapse of time, then come up again. The table calendar shows Saturday. George is slouched on a cot, reading a funny book. Don comes jumping into the room, slinging his cadet cap to the ceiling.*]

Don: Geo-or-ge!! George, I do'd it!

George [*rising*]: What?

Don: Soloed, George, [*breathlessly*] soloed on Saturday!

George: Well, I'll be damned.

Don: Aw don't. Be happy.

George: I'm glad, you know that.

Don: And thankful. That's a man's job, George.

George: She didn't say papa for you?

Don: Hell, no! I called, loud and long, "Mamma"!

George: Scared?

Don: Weak with scare. If I hadn't known that you serviced the ship—if I had had to worry 'bout her innards, too.—I guess I'd be loco-dead by now!

George [*smiling*]: Naw, you wouldn't, Don. You're all right.

Don: Yeah, but I was cocky.

George: You see now, though.

Don: Because of you. Technically, you win our bet. But I swear if I'd pay off, if it weren't for the sense you taught.

George: How's that?

[*The folds of the shirt, two in the front, and three across the back, fade because the khaki shirt no longer looks very, very empty.*]

Don: Doodle-bugs don't make a damn anymore. It's dynamite an' destruction I'm flying now. They don't slow roll and say papa!

George: You know it, kid!

Don: Mary's 2300 at the end of a tired day—and the start of a new day—mean something now.

George: I see they do.

Don: Here y'are, George [*Removing shirt*]. My good luck shirt. [*Playfully.*] Hope it won't feel bad 'bout going into the ground force now that it's soloed!

George: Hell of a swell place for it, Don! Thanks!

[*Lights dimout, denoting a short lapse of time, and come back upon a man whose face is slumped onto the table, two whiskey bottles standing at his elbow, his arm also being crooked on the table. A telegram is crumpled under his fist. His khaki shirt has grease on the elbows, and sickening stains on the shoulder where he has wiped his slobbering mouth. As the lights go up, George lurches sideways, vomits into the trash basket at his foot. He straightens up with a groan and wipes his mouth on his sleeves as his head drops back against*

the chair.]

George: Ellen! [*It is the cry of a lost and lonely child.*] El-len! Where IS my Ellen?? Oooh.

[*George again slouches forward and raises the bottle to his lips. From left, a sergeant and a captain enter. The coiled and entwined snakes on the officer's collar are the emblems of his medical profession, not the images of George's D.T.'s.*]

George: C'min. Have a drink wif me. C'min. [*He waves, wobbly, to the chairs around the room.*]

Captain: Mason!

George: Whaddya wan'?

[*The officer was a man of medicine before he became a man of war.*]

Captain [*sits down*]: I want to help you, Mason. What's the trouble?

George: Damn shirt. Ol' shirt caught Mashun.

Captain: Here, we'll loosen it at the collar.

George [*jerking away*]: No, no, nope. Not there. Shirk break Mashun's heart. Ellen! [*George drops his head into his hands and sobs bitterly. As his tears relieve his anguish, they seem also to clear his brain. He looks up and rubs his sleeve across his face.*]

George [*motioning to telegram*]: Death message. It says: YOU KNEW ABOUT HER HEART. ELLEN GONE. [*Screaming*] EARLY THIS MORNING. [*George rests his head on the table.*]

Captain [*reaching to touch George's arm*]: Sorry, old man.

George [*sobbing*]: And I stayed over to win a shirt!!! I could have seen her! My Ellen!! [*It is the cry of a lost and lonely child.*]

Captain: You want to control yourself, Mason. For Ellen.

George [*hysterically*]: Don't talk about her! I want to drink to death. It'll just be a couple of months. [*While he talks, the captain walks over to the sergeant who has remained standing in the doorway, and gives him instructions.*] Gimme m' liquor! [*Gulps.*] Good stuff. [*Lapsing again into drunkenness.*] Gleamin', tricky shirt—shtinkin' shirt—damn ol' shirt to hell.

Oops. [*George falls across table to vomit into the trash basket. He overturns a bottle, so that when he stands up, whiskey is soaking into the front of the khaki shirt, drowning the two sharp folds across the front. There are still three across the back.*] Take it off! [*Snatches at the collar.*] Ellen, take it off! Shirt's killin' Mashun! Help! Get me outa shirt! Crushin' my heart! [*As two white-clad orderlies rush in with stretcher and straight-jacket, George flings himself free from the shirt sleeves.*] Ellen! I'm here, Ellen!! Can't stand straight up! Oh God, Ellen, it's gone! [*Orderlies pin his arms to his sides, and George sags onto their shoulders. He turns to the captain at the doorway. Laughs hideously.*] My shirt, Captain—ha, ha—hic—my God-damn—his—good luck shirt [*faintly from wings*].

Captain lifts shirt from floor, and says quietly: I'll need your shirt where I'm going, m'boy. [*The khaki shirt, without two sharp folds in front, and with three across the back, looks very, very empty.*]

Lights fade.

SCENE III

[*In a militant, disciplined room dimly lighted, the captain sits at the desk, writing. He wears a khaki shirt with three dim folds across the back, with stains and wrinkles on the front, with the sleeves snatched out raggedly at the shoulder. Above the left seam is a dank, dirty spot where the captain wipes the sweat from his forehead. Across the table from him sits a younger man, a lieutenant, quietly observant.*]

[*Through the poker-faced window, a lush jungle crowds the huts and tiny man-made clearings. It is a powerful jungle, rebellious at the intruders who have spoiled its savage pace. Faint—not too faint—battle sounds creep insidiously into the room.*]

[*Captain Roberts writes steadily.*]

Lt.: Roberts?

Captain: Mmm?

Lt.: Er—excuse me.

Captain: What is it, Sam?

Lt.: It was a very personal question.

Captain: Yes?

Lt.: None of my business.

Captain: Anything can be your business now, Sam. [*Looks toward jungle. Bombs, bullets, and death screams sound closer.*]

Lt.: I was just wondering, Ted.

Captain: Yes?

Lt.: Well, I was wondering what a man'd write home at a time like now.

[*The captain smiles, and lifts his V-mail sheet*]: "My dearest Randy, By the time you receive this, I shall have proved whether or not I am a good officer"—She can't stand not knowing things, Sam—"However, you know my training and my luck [*wipes forehead above left seam on the khaki shirt*] so I wouldn't have you worry.

"Dear Girl, I wanted you desperately last night. Full moon, you know. Here, darling they are honest-to-goodness blue moons. Of course I wouldn't have you here for the world—moonlight is uncomfortably revealing. But, I'd like to pocket the pale love-circle and bring it home to you."

Voice: Ahem Pardon, Roberts. [*A major enters.*]

Roberts: [*unperturbed*]: All right. Perfectly.

Major: I think we'd better synchronize watches, gentlemen.

Lt.: 2249.

Captain: 2250.

Major: 2249, right.

Captain: Thanks, I've changed.

Major: And zero?

Captain: We have it, sir.

Lt.: Yessir, 2300.

Major: Good-night gentlemen. And good luck to you. [*All three men look out the poker-faced window as a hissing, screaming bomb shakes the building when it explodes close by. The major hurries out.*]

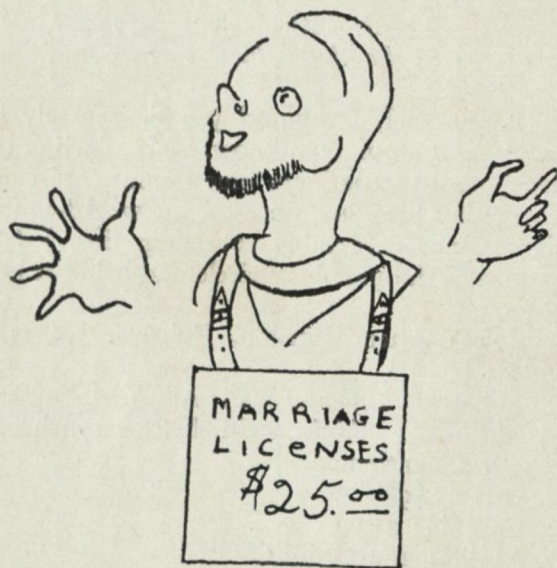
Captain: Where was I, Sam? Oh yes—"put it in my pocket and bring it home to you."

"Dear Randy, I will bring it home to you soon. Whatever else you doubt, Dear Girl, know this—not all the wars in all the worlds can get a man as long as peace is inside him. You are my heart's peace, Randy"—Wup, head low, Sam! [*As he speaks, the building shakes,*

the window's poker-face splinters and becomes a gaping, vacuous hole. The lights waver, flicker, and fade as shadowy figures race and scramble in the clearing. Just as suddenly as chaos came, it goes. And the lights blink on again. Roberts picks up his letter.] "You are my peace, Randy, my love and lasting faith."

I do love you, darling, for always,
Your Ted"

There, that's what a man ten minutes from zero writes to his wife, Sam. That's—



SHE MUST HAVE BRIBED THE GODS

(Continued from page 17)

their protoplasm. Just like that they had the reports down to Shylock. He collected his twenty-five ducats even though blood was shed and Babe and her man were off to marital bliss. Day of the wedding dawned clear and bright though somewhat filled with snowflakes. Jr. shook her dear, sweet sister from a lovely sleep and pushed her out of bed. "Oh, Mimi, do you think he'll really marry me?—after all those people are invited for tonite and I made those lovely cookies? Do you think he'll like my cooking? Oh, my lion cub! what if he doesn't show up, Miriam? Hurry-up we've got scads to do. Sir Launcelot will be here anytime now and I, unlike Queen Guinevere, must follow.

"Give me your love for a day, a night,

[Again, the poker-face is gouged, the building shakes. With an agonized groan, the roof of the militant, disciplined room falls to the floor. Across a man's waist, a heavy beam—life-crushing—falls to protect him from the bullets and shrapnel. As the lights go out, the khaki shirt catches, and glows with, the last rays. It has three folds across the back, and it will never again look very, very empty.]

Curtain.

—ALDA ALEXANDER

an hour

If the wages of sin are death, I'm willing to pay

For what is my life, but a breath of passion burning away?"

Doesn't Lawrence Hope write beautifully, Miriam? That's just exactly how I feel. Oh—" and the tears flowed.

. . . Time passes . . .

The bell rang. Jr. in her dignified pseudo-sophisticated way jumped from her chair, hit the ceiling and landed at the door—threw it open and—the grocery boy stared, "Where do you want these, Jr.? What're you all dressed up for?" "Take 'em to the kitchen. Whyn't you come the back way? You're getting the floor all dirty and besides—"

Hollow steps resounded on the stair and Jr. fell into a chair. Hal sneaked in, "Uh-uh, hello." Boy with groceries gaped at Harold. "You got new clothes, too, aint'cha? and gloves. Hah-hah! Sissy! Sissy! Harold is a sissy!" "Get out of here, you brat. Say where's Cy?"

"Here I am," glowed a red-head at the door. "All ready? Let's get it over with."

Jr.: "G'bye, Mom—I guess we're goin' now. Miriam—Mimi! Where are you? Come on! Cyril, comb your hair. Have you got the ring and money for the minister, Hal? OK, let's go."—a la crescendo.

To the church, up the aisle. "I do"—do you? do you believe in love? "I now pronounce you man and wife; just collapse in those chairs over there."

. . . Anti-climax . . .

—MIRIAM WARREN CHYLINSKI.

WHITE CANDLES

(Continued from page 8)

sound of a clock, striking midnight. She looked once more at the water . . . then turned away.

Noel hailed a taxi and rode home, urging, "Please, driver, it's very important that I get there soon." And at last she was running up the steps and feeling in the mail box for the key. Once inside, she leaned against the door for support. The room seemed warm and comfortable. . . She thought of the other rooms she'd seen. "This is best," she said, "because it's home, I guess."

After a moment she looked at the manuscript she was still clutching. A faint smile crossed her face. "'Rejected'," she said.

Across the room her sister lay, still sleeping. Noel tiptoed over, picked up a piece of paper from the table by the bed, and took something from the table drawer. She glanced at the clock. Its hands now stood at 12:30 . . . "Christmas Day," she thought. Then she bent and switched off the tiny lamp that always burned by the bed at night. She felt her way in the darkness to the window. A moment later she had struck a match and a light gleamed through the glass . . . the flickering flame of a candle. Then her hand moved toward the flame. She held the note lightly and watched its edges curl until at last it had passed on into ashes. Finally she looked upward . . . her lips moved slowly . . . "Here is your candle," she said.

—MILDRED COLLINS



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A TALK ABOUT BRITAIN

(Continued from page 16)

Britain produces almost four centuries of steady, sure men who make and keep her master of the seas and commerce, and terms them typical. An alliance with Britain—cool, home-loving — and America — quick, progressive—

should prove, in time, to be equally beneficial to both countries. The two nations should strive to understand the contrasts between them, and use them to advantage to produce not only the mightiest countries the world has ever seen, but the best world the world has even seen.

—MARIAN HINE.

PEGGY HALE

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